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RFK Jr. says 20% of health agency layoffs could be mistakes



By **Alexander Tin**Edited By **Nicole Brown Chau**, Paula Cohen
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Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. suggested Thursday that around 20% of the job cuts by the Trump administration's Department of Government Efficiency will be wrong and need to be corrected.

Around 10,000 employees were <u>laid off</u> from the Department of Health and Human Services on Tuesday, as part of a <u>restructuring</u> architected by <u>Kennedy</u> and Elon Musk's <u>DOGE</u> task force. But Kennedy acknowledged they didn't get

everything right the first time.

"Personnel that should not have been cut, were cut. We're reinstating them. And that was always the plan. Part of the – at DOGE, we talked about this from the beginning, is we're going to do 80% cuts, but 20% of those are going to have to be reinstated, because we'll make mistakes," Kennedy said, speaking to reporters at a stop in Virginia.

Kennedy said that the elimination of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's entire Lead Poisoning Prevention and Surveillance Branch was among the mistakes.

It is unclear which other programs Kennedy may be planning to restore. The department did not immediately provide a response for a request for comment.

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Multiple CDC officials said they had so far not heard of plans to reinstate the lead poisoning program.

Among the immediate impacts of eliminating its work was an outstanding request from Milwaukee's health department for help responding to lead in water, which had stalled, multiple CDC officials said.

Known as an <u>"Epi-Aid,"</u> or investigation into a public health problem, the CDC assistance "will not be able to continue due to the loss of subject matter experts," agency officials had said internally this week.

Elsewhere in the department, a handful of employees who got termination notices at the Food and Drug Administration have already been asked back to work temporarily, multiple FDA officials said.

Among those asked to work for a few more weeks before they are cut include teams in the agency's inspections and investigations office, two officials said, after the agency's office lost around 170 employees. The office has been <u>planning</u> for cuts to routine inspections of drugmakers and food producers because of the layoffs.

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In: United States Department of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

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